quer, due to decay of timber lying in the forest;

(b) whether soil is likely to be poisoned on account of timber rots; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to remove timber logs from forests, in order to save natural habitat as well as soil pollution?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) Hon'ble Supreme Court vide order dated 15.1.1998 in Writ Petition No. 202/95 has issued detailed directions to regulate felling, transportation and processing of timber in the North-Eastern States. Necessary steps have been taken to expedite transportation and disposal of felled timber in conformity with the said directions. The loss in monetary value of felled timber due to deterioration in the quality of timber lying in forests can not be quantified.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Rail connection for Sundergarh in Orissa

*299. MISS FRIDA TOPNO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Sundergarh district headquarters in Orissa has not been provided with rail link;

(b) whether Government have any proposal to connect Jharsuguda with Bisrampur via Sundergarh by rail;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a)Yes, Sir. Even though Sundergarh Town, district headquarters of Sundergarh, has not been provided with rail link, the Mumbai—Calcutta main line passes through Sundergarh District and the rail users in the district are served by Rourkela and bondamunda stations. The District is also served by the railway line from Bondamunda to Ranchi and from Bondamunda to Barsuan via Bimlagarh.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Constraint of resources.

Licences for Hunting Endangered Species

*300. SHRI AKHILESH DAS:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report in the 'Tribune' of 4th August, 1998, captioned "Where Government gives licence to kill";

(b) if so, whether hunting of endangered species is allowed in different States, including Jammu and Kashmir under licence issued by the State Governments as a royal sport, on payment of prescribed fees for the so called Small games, Big games and Special games;

(c) whether the bound shahtoos trade is also allowed in J&K under licence; and

(d) whether Government have laid down any national policy to protect the endangered species and for prevention of cruelty to animals; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Hunting of animals included in Schedules II, III & IV under Jammu & Kashmir Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1978 is allowed in Jammu & Kashmir under licences issued by the Chief Wildlife Warden.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Trade in wild animals is regulated through the provisions of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 which extends to all the States/UTs except J&K. Prevention or cruelty to animals is regulated through the provisions of The Prevention of